

Success Story

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SBA Guaranteed Loan Helps Atlanta-Based Pineapple House Expand as a Leading Interior Design-Development Firm *—Company Works with Clients in the Southeast, the West Coast and Canada—*

When Stephen Pararo started Pineapple House Interior Design in 1981, he had a staff of three associates. Today, his company has over 40 professionals in both design and production divisions that provide turn-key services to residential and commercial clients from exclusive resorts in Florida to mountain homes in Canada.



Stephen Pararo of **the Pineapple House**, seated, takes a break with some of his key staff. Standing, left to right, are Angie Thompson, Leah Mannheimer, and Zach Axpeitia. Seated, from left, are Lanah Barkley, Pararo, and Nikki Burch.

In addition to design and custom production of interior fixtures and accessories, the award-winning company has gone into the development business near Highlands, North Carolina.

In growing his company, Pararo used financing in the early 1980's from a \$300,000 SBA guaranteed loan for working capital. "The loan helped jump-start our business and gave us, at that time, the working capital we needed," recalled Pararo whose firm received three ASID (American Society of Interior Design) Excellence Awards this year.

When Pararo started his company in Atlanta, it was strictly a design firm. But as it grew, Pineapple House has developed into a custom installation firm with a separate division that produces custom-ordered drapes, fabrication and covering of upholstered furniture, and an art department for custom interior appointments.

Pararo and his brother David Pararo, who is Construction Manager at Pineapple House, are heavily involved with the Thomas Knob community a few miles from the resort town of Highlands, N.C. Their company is overseeing the construction of three homes in the 22-acre, gated development.

The company recently completed the design and custom furnishing of a luxury condominium in the Trump International high-rise complex overlooking Central Park in New York City as well as a penthouse in San Diego, California. The firm is also doing work for clients with residences or second homes in Florida, California and Canada.

Pararo says about 50 percent of his work is done in Georgia while his other contracts are with both residential and commercial clients out of state. Until a few years ago, about half of his work had been

interior design/decoration. However, about half of the firm's new work involves working with builders and architects on the construction of new homes.

"Going into this decade," added Pararo, "we started doing more new home construction, working closely with the architect to shepherd clients through the selection of their interior furnishings and fixtures."

When it comes to satisfying his customers' needs, Pararo says people have very broad ideas about what they want. "Our biggest compliment is that when our work is done, it looks like it's been there for years."

Pineapple House and its production and design studios are housed in a 35,000 square-foot facility. The design studio takes up about 8,000 square feet of the complex that includes one of the largest private resource libraries on the East Coast with hand-picked samples of carpet, wall paper and fabric for furniture as well as various types of tile and stone for floors and countertops.

So far this year, Pineapple House has captured the following Georgia Chapter ASID Design Excellence Awards: Gold for Product/Custom Design (SH bed), Gold for Model Homes / Show House (Dining Room,) and a Silver for Product/Custom Design (DIFFA). Since 2001, Pararo and his firm have earned 10 additional ASID Awards of Excellence.

Since last March, coverage of Pineapple House in home and style magazines has included a story for Atlanta Style and Design, Spring, 2005; Better Homes and Garden's "Color Schemes" Spring 2005; Atlanta Home and Lifestyles, April 2005; Atlanta magazine, April, 2005; and Atlanta Home Improvement, July, 2005.

In his spare time, Pararo helped establish Childkind Inc., an organization that provides housing and foster care placement for children who are HIV positive or drug addictive at birth. Initially he purchased the first home for the charity and was its President for several years.

Born in Chattanooga, Pararo grew up in Tallahassee, Florida where his late father, Dr. Luther Pararo Jr., practiced medicine. Pararo has a B.S. degree from the School of Architecture at Georgia Tech as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design from Florida State University. He has been a professional member of the American Society of Interior Design (ASID) since 1976 and is a registered Interior Designer in Georgia.

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